# XI. Clandestine Meetings. Eluding Surveillance

In the life of an underground operative nothing is as simple as it is in the lives of ordinary, carefree people. Even such a trivial matter as making an appointment with another person must be planned with care, arranged with absolute clarity that precludes any possibility of misunderstanding, and carried out with the maximum of safety. When naming a place for the meeting, both parties must make sure that they have in mind the same place, that such a place really exists, and that it will be accessible at the time of the proposed meeting. It is surprising how many meetings went astray because the above-mentioned details had not been taken into account. I remember an incident when the deputy chief of the Foreign Department of the NKVD, Loginov, arranged by wire to meet the Soviet underground resident in France, Kepp. Both agreed to come to Vienna on a certain day and put up at the Park Hotel. Both duly arrived on the date, but could not find each other. On the third day of waiting Kepp, who was under strict orders to stay away from Soviet embassies, went to the Soviet embassy to find out where Loginov was. There he learned from the local resident that Loginov had left a few hours before for Moscow, furious at Kepp for not having kept the appointment. Kepp was baffled. He swore that he stopped at the Park Hotel and produced the key to his room. On that key was written: "Park Hotel Schoenbrun," which was famous and well known. But Loginov stopped at another, little known, "Park Hotel."



A similar incident occurred in New York, where two underground officers of the Red Army intelligence, by the name of Stern and Gorev, were supposed to stop at the St. George Hotel. One of them stopped at the St. George Hotel in Brooklyn and the other at the hotel by the same name in Manhattan.

Another resident was instructed by cable from Moscow to meet an agent in Paris at the well-known restaurant Duval on Rue Madeleine, in the center of the city. This was a place at which the resident used to dine often when he had served in Paris a few years before. To his surprise he could not find the restaurant. Puzzled, he turned for information to a policeman on duty not far away. The policeman explained that the restaurant had been closed for over a year and the place rebuilt by a piano-producing firm for its showrooms. "Amazing!" chuckled the policeman. "You are the second tourist who within five minutes asked me about the Duval restaurant. There he is!" said the policeman and pointed to a man who was reading a theatrical announcement on the wall, a dozen steps away.

Another intelligence officer, who a few years before had worked in Germany, by wire instructed a secret agent to meet him at a certain hour inside a well-known bank on the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin. This appointment was faulty on two accounts: first, the meeting was set for a day when all the banks were closed, and, second, as it turned out, the massive building of the bank had vanished from the face of the earth, having been demolished and replaced by a modern office building.

Experience has taught intelligence officers to arrange appointments with more care and foresight and to set two or three consecutive appointments at different places and hours to make sure that if one meeting does not come off, the other will.

Often, meetings are arranged between people who have never seen each other before, and steps must be taken to insure that they recognize and identify each other without fail. In such cases it is especially important that both parties should appear at the predetermined place promptly on time. Both persons must be supplied, first, with general recognition data of each other. For instance, A must be told that B, whom he is going to meet, is forty years old, five feet, ten inches tall, stout, with dark hair, and wears hornrimmed glasses. Then the specific details follow: B will wear a blue coat, gray felt hat, and a polka dot tie. He will have a certain magazine in his hand.

The procedure may then demand that A should approach B and start a prearranged dialogue, which may run like this: "Say, haven't we met recently at Al Grosby's party?"—"Oh, yes, of course we have, but that was not at Grosby's. It was at Madame Gates's cocktail party."

Sometimes, the procedure of recognition requires that each party produce a previously stipulated object which cannot be easily duplicated. For instance, A and B produce each a dollar bill, both bills bearing consecutive numbers. There was a time when intelligence services of a number of countries used to divide a unique object in two parts and give one part to each of the meeting parties. However, the NKVD intelligence discontinued this practice after the Polish counterintelligence service arrested two Soviet secret agents



each of whom had a half of the same dollar bill in his wallet. Thus, from a means of identification, the two halves of the paper dollar became proof that the two Russians, who denied knowing each other, belonged to the same conspiratorial organization.

The prearranged dialogue between both parties, which serves as a kind of password, must be specific, otherwise it may be misleading and cause trouble, as can be seen from the following incident. A young Soviet operative in Germany was sent to a certain suburban bus stop in Berlin and instructed to meet there a courier unknown to him and hand over to him a little box of talcum, inside of which there was a roll of secret films. At the bus stop the young man immediately spotted the person who fully answered the description of the man he was supposed to meet. He approached the man, smiled at him and said: "I am here as a tourist, I admire your beautiful country."—"Yes, it is beautiful. I am also a tourist," answered the man. His answer was letter perfect. The young operative, who related the story to me, said he was about to hand over the package to the stranger, when the latter suddenly said: "That's my bus!" and quickly boarded the vehicle.

Meetings may be regular or special. The regular ones take place—usually between the same contact and "source"—at certain intervals in accordance with a prearranged routine schedule. If for some reason one party fails to appear, the meeting is expected to take place the next day at the same time, if no other variations have been agreed to. The officer and the "source" must have an understanding that if, for some unforeseen reason, contact between them has been lost, both of them must come on a certain day, or days, to a certain place. This is known as a "control meeting."

There, the one who has failed to keep the previous appointments must give a sign as to whether he can be approached, and if he can the meeting takes place.

The intelligence officer must always be conscious of the fact that his telephone and those of his confederates may be tapped. Therefore, he must not use his own telephone for communications with any one of the members of the *residentura* proper or of the network. The best thing is to use public telephones for such occasions. When the officer makes an appointment with an informant over the telephone, he must try to throw the eavesdroppers off the track by juggling the time and place of the meeting. For instance, if he wants to see the informant on Wednesday at 8 P.M., he tells him that he would like to meet him on Thursday at 9 P.M. If he adds "at your place" or "at my place," it may mean Café de Paris or restaurant Petit Chat, respectively. In case the officer has serious reason to suspect that the telephone of the person he is calling might be tapped, he must be doubly cautious. When the informant answers, the officer may pretend that he dialed the wrong number, excuse himself in a specified form, and hang up. This will serve as a signal to the informant that he should come to a certain public telephone where the officer will call him up in one hour, and, if the informant cannot make it, then in another half an hour. Both parties must agree in advance on the meaning of a few indispensable phrases and terms which would allow them to convey to each other the simplest things of their trade. Concise coded expressions must be invented for emergency situations which would enable the informant to tell his superiors that he is being shadowed, that his apartment has been searched by



the police, that the officers have seized compromising data, and so on. Diverting a call from a private to a public phone is widely practiced by Soviet intelligence agents because this offers the possibility of talking freely without fear of the wire being tapped. In this way an officer may keep in touch with several informants daily, using a number of public telephones. However, in this procedure there is one disadvantage that should not be lost sight of. If the informant happens to be a traitor or a plant, then the police may tape the whole conversation, a thing they would not be able to do so easily if the officer had a face to face conversation with the informant.

It is absolutely incumbent upon the intelligence officer and the informant to establish whether they are being shadowed and to make sure that they have come to their rendezvous completely "clean" and that neither of them has brought to the meeting place a "tail" behind himself. If one of them, on the way to the meeting, notices or feels that he is being shadowed, he has no right to keep the appointment. In case surveillance has been discovered at the very place of the meeting, or immediately thereafter, it is important to find out which of the two participants had originally fallen under the suspicion of the investigative agencies. If it can be established, for instance, that it was A who attracted the attention of the secret police, he can go back in his analysis of the recent past and try to find the rotten link or contact that pointed the finger at him.

Every intelligence officer must periodically check himself against possible surveillance. This can best be done at leisure by taking long walks or rides to secluded places, where the traffic is very light and where

it is easy to see whether one is being "tailed." This kind of checking is not designed to shake off the trackers, but to make sure whether or not there is surveillance. However, it is quite a different matter when the officer sets out to keep an appointment, especially when secret documents are going to be passed. Here the officer must not only make sure that he is not being trailed, but he is required to use every ruse known to him to shake off any real or imaginary trackers whom he might have failed to notice.

The officer may take a passing taxi and follow a route on which it should not be difficult to determine whether another car is trailing him. The fact that a car, which to the discomfiture of the officer has been doggedly following his taxi, has suddenly turned off the road and disappeared, does not mean that the taxi is no longer being trailed. Another car may suddenly appear behind the taxi, and this one may belong to a string of police cars that follow one another at a discreet distance, too far to be seen clearly by the officer in the taxi. To mislead and lull the officer further this car may also turn off the road, only to be replaced by still another vehicle. When a well-managed secret police is bent on trailing a serious "customer," it tries to foresee every eventuality and prepares foot surveillants as well as a brigade of motorcars which maintain contact by radio and pass the suspect to each other's care in the same way as football players pass a ball to one another. If the officer is satisfied with the results of the taxi ride, he may then resort to the so-called "filter" method. He enters a department store, or a big hotel, lingers not far from the elevators and jumps into the elevator seconds before it goes up. If nobody enters the elevator after him, he can be sure that no surveillant has caught up with him. Then he leaves the elevator on one of the upper floors, crosses to another elevator, or to the escalator (or the stairway), comes down, and goes out by a different exit. A few minutes later he hails a passing taxi and goes to his destination. There are many other ways to avoid trackers, and, if the officer has not become lax and negligent, he may feel confident that he will not bring surveillants to the meeting place.



As a rule the operative must check himself carefully again after the meeting, especially if he is going to keep another appointment. This precaution is needed for two reasons: Although the operative may feel confident that he has arrived at the meeting place "clean," he can never be completely sure that the other party has succeeded in doing the same; and one must always keep in mind that the other party may turn out to be a double who has infiltrated the Soviet network, or a person who started out as a bona fide informant, but under the influence of some unknown circumstances has changed sides in midstream.

Because the safety of the intelligence officer depends a great deal on whether his informants are able to come to the appointments without bringing a "tail" behind them, it is important that the intelligence officer should teach his informants how they should check themselves against surveillance and what methods they should employ to shake off real or supposed surveillants. It is even more important to see to it that the "group leaders," whose job it is to meet informants regularly, should never let down their guard against enemy surveillance. For that purpose, it is recommended that the *residentura* should, once in a while, trail each "group leader" when he is on his way to keep

an appointment (without his knowledge) and thus test his alertness and skill in discovering and dodging trackers.

If there is even a slight suspicion that the informant may have been planted by the police, it is sometimes useful for the intelligence officer to put his meeting with that man under observation. As an example, I may refer to a case which actually happened in Paris. A Soviet intelligence officer had an appointment at a big cafe with a high official of the French Ministry of Commerce who had hinted to the Soviet trade representative in France that he would like to co-operate with the Russians and who had actually turned over to him classified data concerning the trade policy of the French government toward Russia. Setting out to keep the appointment with the Frenchman, whom he intended to enlist in the network, the intelligence officer dispatched to the cafe two of his agents with instructions to watch his rendezvous with the Frenchman from the side lines. During the meeting the Russian officer noticed that two men sitting a few tables away were stealthily but sharply observing him. "Those two men look like police agents," remarked the Russian to the French official.—"Oh, no," retorted the Frenchman. "To me they look like typical middlemen, brokers, I should say, who conduct their business from cafes."

When the interview was over, the Russian was the first to leave the cafe. A few minutes later, the Frenchman went over to the table of the two men and the three of them engaged in an animated talk. One of the Russian observers, who sat not far from their table, was able to make out that they were talking about "le canaille russe" and the Comintern. Then they ordered



a meal. The check was picked up by one of the original occupants of the table. The three men left together in the same taxi. Thus, the crude attempt of the French police to plant a "double" was nipped in the bud.

Clandestine meetings may be held in a great variety of places: private apartments, hotels, restaurants, automobiles, offices, libraries, museums, physicians' or dentists' offices, etc. The choice of place depends on many imponderables and often on whether the parties intend to have a long discussion, or a short talk, or a "silent meeting." The so-called silent meetings are designed to eliminate the obviousness of the communication between the two participants and to deceive the surveillants. Such meetings are usually held in parks, museums, libraries, and similar places. For instance, the operative and the "source" pretend to be studying some reference material at the library. Both, independently of each other, make notes while sitting or standing side by side, or opposite each other; then one of the two departs and, instead of taking his own notebook, or folder, picks up that of his neighbor. Or, while perusing a number of books, one of them slips an envelope into a certain volume, which his neighbor retrieves a little later. Only an experienced detective, who knows who the two "researchers" are, could detect such a sleight-of-hand trick. There are other variations of the same technique: Two persons separately enter a movie theater and take adjacent seats. There, under the cover of darkness, one passes the material to the other. Or the two find themselves together on the same bench in the park. One of them has brought a magazine or newspaper which he puts on the bench between him-

self and the other person. When nobody is around to notice, the other picks up the magazine (with the envelope inside it) and walks away.

In important cases the NKVD intelligence relies heavily on trusted dentists and physicians who help to cover up clandestine meetings. The dentist, for instance, reserves a convenient hour (usually at the end of the reception time) for two of his clients who pass through the dentist's office into a back room. Later, they leave separately by a side door.

I remember a curious incident that occurred in Berlin, where a Soviet underground operative and his "source" were conferring in the reception room of a dentist's office. Although the dentist had no more appointments, the doorbell rang. With the secretary gone for the day, the dentist had to answer the door himself. But before doing that, he put one of his "clients" in the dental chair and the other in the back room, behind the office. Then he admitted a middle-aged man who complained of a sudden toothache. The dentist asked him to wait and returned to his patient. When the two men left the office by a side door, the dentist put the new client in the chair. He saw at once that the patient was feigning pain. He told the man that there was nothing wrong with his teeth, ascribed the pain to a temporary state of neuralgia, and did not charge him anything for the examination.

The client was obviously impressed with the professional competence and honesty of the dentist. "I see that you are an honest man," he said, "and I am sure that you are a good German as well." After that compliment he produced his identity card of a police detective and asked the dentist for information about his previous patient. The detective had in mind the



Soviet operative. He confided to the dentist that the Gestapo had information that the man was a Comintern agent. He asked the dentist to try to find out, in the course of a friendly chat, where the suspected Russian had been born, where his wife was, and what her first name was. The detective volunteered information that she was a graduate of the Lenin School in Moscow. He did not evince interest in the other man.

The warning was God sent. The next day the operative was out of the country. The "source" was put in quarantine for a couple of months, and when the resident was satisfied that the man was not under police observation contact with him was resumed.

Western counterintelligence and security agencies, as a rule, rarely employ women for outdoor trailing of suspected spies. This self-imposed limitation, was successfully used by the NKVD intelligence to counteract surveillants, and in a few cases literally stopped the trackers in their tracks. Often, when important documents had to be passed from the "source" to the operative or back, the *residentura* employed two women as couriers. The women would enter a restaurant or cafeteria separately and sit at different tables. Then, a few minutes apart, they would go to the ladies' room, where one of them would transmit the documents to the other, sometimes in a silent operation by each picking up the other's handbags. The eager detectives would thus find themselves suddenly barred, when their quarry disappeared behind the forbidden door.

As I have already mentioned, the "source" or informant is the most important figure in the Soviet intelligence set-up because without him no secret information of any value could be obtained. The principal

function of the staff of the *residentura* is to direct the work of each informant, to teach him how to do his work effectively, and to guard him against mistakes that may prove fatal.

The staff officer of the *residentura* is obliged to know the personal history of the informant, the circumstances under which he was recruited, the quality of the work which he was able to render, his personal traits and character, and the extent of his reliability. In order to be able to judge the actual and potential possibilities of the informant, the officer must study all the details concerning the official position which the informant occupies in the government department, the nature of his work, the names and positions of his immediate superiors, his relations with the other members of the staff, the extent of his authority, and whether he has legal access to the secret documents or manages to get hold of them unlawfully. The officer must know how classified materials circulate through the department, how many persons within the department have access to various categories of secret documents, and whether the informant has, or may obtain, access to the safe, keys, and combinations.

No detail should be overlooked by the officer, no matter how insignificant, because it is often the small detail that traps the informant. I remember an incident when an experienced officer taught a young recruit at length how he should take out a certain document of great importance from the safe of the German war ministry. When, a few days later, the young man came to the rendezvous with the officer, beaming with pride, the officer was shocked to see the young man take the precious document out of his breast pocket. It was on a half a dozen pages of legal size and had been folded



neatly in four to fit the pocket. This was not the informant's fault. The responsibility lay with the officer who failed to warn the new recruit that a stolen document should never be folded because this proves conclusively that the paper has been taken out and carried in a pocket. Such a slip can alert the security agencies and prompt them to institute surveillance inside and outside the department and resort to a number of devices, such as electric-eye photography or coating the secret files with invisible finger-printing substances, to entrap the intruder.

The officer must become the counselor and tutor of the informant and guide him not only in his spy work but in his official career as well, striving to attain promotions for him, and, when it is in the interests of Soviet intelligence, to get him transferred to another section or department, where his usefulness to the Soviets can be greater. Often such a transfer is sought by the Soviet intelligence when the department in which the informant is employed is well covered by other secret informants, whereas another department or section still waits to be infiltrated.

To take secret documents from a file is a delicate and risky affair, and the officer must explain to the informant that he does not want him to take out papers indiscriminately just because they happen to be stamped "secret" or "top secret." As a rule, the informant is advised to report first what kind of documents he has seen, and only after that is he told which of the papers to bring, if any. Only when the informant is highly developed politically and has had long experience in intelligence work is he permitted to exercise his own judgment and snatch important papers, while the snatching is good.

Mature and serious intelligence officers do not subject their informants to unnecessary risks and are satisfied to receive oral reports about the content of classified papers. They instruct the informant to steal secret documents only when they contain important information, or when an opportunity presents itself to photostat documentary evidence that a foreign state or group of states is hatching, behind the scenes, a conspiracy against the Soviet Union. In one case the Russian Politburo attached so much importance to certain foreign documents that it was not satisfied with the photostats obtained by the NKVD intelligence and demanded that one of the original documents be stolen, which was duly accomplished.

Some ambitious careerists among the Soviet intelligence officers prod their informants to steal documents marked "top secret," with high-sounding letterheads such as "Office of the Foreign Minister" or "Committee of Imperial Defense," with the sole purpose of impressing Moscow with their ability to rummage freely in the secret files of a foreign government. How dull some of such stolen documents are can be seen from the famous "pumpkin" papers obtained by the Soviet secret agent Whittaker Chambers from the American State Department, papers which contained neither state secrets nor information of any value or interest to the Soviet Union.

When instructing the informant in the matter of lifting secret documents, the officer must take into account many technical details, such as the minimum time required for the operation, whether the papers might be missed, where they should be photographed, and how they should be restored to the files. To save time, some of the informants are taught to photograph documents.



In such cases the informants must be furnished not with specialized photographic equipment, but with the kind of camera that any amateur photographer might have. Only in cases in which the informant has to deal with large scientific and technological blueprints is he supplied with specialized equipment, which is usually installed for him by Russian experts. Skilled in filming documents, the informant may take the classified papers on the way to lunch and bring them back into the office immediately after lunch. To justify his claim to being an amateur photographer, the informant is advised to have at his home family pictures and other innocent snapshots lying around.

# XII. Bait

The activity of the intelligence service is aggressive and *offensive*. Its agents go out boldly to steal and rob the vital secrets of a foreign nation. The activity of the counterintelligence is *defensive*. Its duty is to protect the state secrets of the nation, to uncover foreign spies, and to render them harmless. Both forces are engaged in an endless battle of wits. We hear more often of fabulous feats carried out by spies against all odds—diplomatic papers stolen, atomic secrets carried away, blueprints of atomic submarines transmitted to a foreign power, secret code experts fleeing to Russia. And almost always we hear that the barn was locked after the horse was stolen. The work of the intelligence agent is dangerous, the work of the counterintelligence agent is safe but very difficult.

A Soviet intelligence agent in a foreign country may come to grief in a number of ways: a government employee whom he lures into the Soviet network may denounce him to the security police, or a Foreign Office clerk who has been observed stealing classified documents may be trailed to the meeting place with the Soviet agent, or photographs of stolen papers may accidentally be left in a taxi, or the true identity of the Soviet agent may suddenly come to light as a result of an unhappy encounter . . . Such blows come suddenly from unexpected quarters, and there is not much



the agent can do. However, there are critical moments in the life of the underground agent when he knows that he may be walking into a trap, but, being carried away by excessive zeal and the instinct of a gambler, he challenges fate itself and loses.

These moments usually occur when the counterintelligence agency of the government (or the secret police) succeeds in planting attractive *bait* in the path of the Soviet operative and dangles it on and off so temptingly that the latter succumbs to wishful thinking and swallows it. Then he is hooked for good. I have seen experienced intelligence chiefs, who had never failed to warn their subordinates against the fallacy of wishful thinking, themselves succumb to it.

The first symptom of bait is that it is planted so conveniently that is too good to be true. One of the ways to distinguish bait from a bona fide opportunity is to examine closely how the opportunity has presented itself and whether the Soviet agent, or somebody's unseen hand, was holding the initiative. The distinguishing line between a "plant" and the real thing is so thin that sometimes a bona fide offer is rejected for fear of a trap. One of the most valuable informants the NKVD ever had, a lieutenant-colonel of the German General Staff, was first turned down when he offered his services to the military attaché of the Soviet embassy in Berlin.

A year later, an NKVD underground resident in Berlin, contrary to the warnings of his superiors, approached the same colonel and came to terms with him. The resident told him frankly that he did not trust him, but was willing to try him out. He offered him a substantial monthly salary and a bonus for every paper adjudged valuable and arranged that the colonel should photograph the documents himself and bring the rolls

of film to Prague or Copenhagen. The first delivery contained such important and completely authentic documents that it became clear that there was no hoax or "plant" involved. One of the papers containing data on the annual production of German bomber planes had already been received previously from another, absolutely reliable, source. When a few months later the colonel expressed apprehension that his frequent trips abroad might arouse suspicion, the resident again defied the advice of his superiors and began to accept the films from the German in Berlin, in the office of a trusted physician. Had the resident been searched by the Gestapo after his emergence from the physician's office, they would have found nothing. The rolls of films were always carried out of the office (without the knowledge of the colonel) by another "patient."

The fear of falling into a trap set through planted informants is so deep seated in the minds of undercover Soviet intelligence officers that there were cases when the NKVD intelligence dropped valuable informants from its net on the basis of inconclusive suspicion. The following will illustrate the point.

One day a well-dressed man entered the Soviet embassy in Czechoslovakia. He told the Russian receptionist that he wished to see someone of the top personnel of the embassy on a very important matter. He declined to give his name to the receptionist. After some hesitation, the Soviet vice-consul, an NKVD man, agreed to talk to him. The visitor came straight to the point. He said he was an official of the Foreign Office of a European country (which he named), that he got himself into financial difficulties and decided to offer his services to the U.S.S.R. He produced a few



samples of what he could deliver—carbon copies of diplomatic exchanges between the Foreign Office of his country with its ambassador in Moscow. Although the vice-consul, with an air of offended innocence, remarked that the Soviet embassy did not engage in that kind of underhanded activities, the visitor left the papers and a telephone number with the consul and explained how he could be summoned to a meeting.

The carbon copies were dispatched to the Home Office for analysis and were found to be authentic. After that, Moscow instructed one of its underground residents in Europe to check up on that man and, if no adverse information turned up, approach him with the utmost caution because he might be a "plant." As a result, contact was established and the *residentura* began to receive copies of diplomatic correspondence from the new informant, not only with that country's embassy in Moscow, but also with its embassies in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and other Eastern European states. The new source began to grow in importance after the so-called "Little Council," which evaluated all incoming intelligence data for the Politburo, became interested in the circular letters on the international situation sent by the Foreign Office to its ambassadors abroad for orientation.

In the meantime, Moscow continued to confirm the authenticity of the material received from the new source. Then suddenly things began to happen. One day, the Home Office wired to the underground resident that it had obtained (through another *residentura*) a photostat of the payroll of the Foreign Office and that the name of the newly acquired "source" was not on it. Moscow ordered meetings with the man discontinued until further notice and that he be taken under close

surveillance. Moscow expressed apprehension that the man was a "plant" and that the secret police were feeding the *residentura* with authentic material in order to uncover as many members of the Soviet ring as possible. The surveillance soon disclosed that every morning the new informant went to a government agency which dealt with affairs of war veterans and was apparently working there. Informed about this, Moscow ordered a break with the man for good, and the officer who had maintained contact with him was recalled to Russia for fear of his arrest.

The contact man, an intelligent and brave young officer who was proud of his first successful assignment, felt that he was being robbed of a great opportunity. He did not share the apprehensions of the chiefs and begged to be allowed, before leaving the country, to have a last talk with the man and find out what had made him behave in the way he did. In this he had the support of the resident director, his immediate chief. By the time Moscow acceded to his entreaties, he had skipped two or three appointments with the informant. Fearing that the young officer might be seized if the secret police had advance notice of the forthcoming appointment, the resident instructed the officer to wait for the man near the War Veterans Building at the end of the working day, to follow him for some distance in order to make sure that he was alone, and then to accost him and invite him for a talk. Two other Soviet operatives were instructed to trail the officer just in case and to watch the developments.

The man was caught off base when the young officer suddenly confronted him and asked for an explanation. Startled and confused, he admitted that he had never worked at the Foreign Office and that he was an official



of the veterans' administration. Why did he misrepresent himself? His explanation sounded plausible. He said that he was shielding another person from whom he was getting the carbon copies. It was his widowed sister, employed as a confidential secretary and chief stenographer in the East-European Department of the Foreign Office. The Russian demanded proof. None was immediately available. Then the officer proposed the following acid test: the man should immediately call up his sister and ask her to join him at a certain cafe. There he should introduce him to her and say: "This is the gentleman who receives the carbon copies from me. He knows now everything. Please, do not be afraid and answer all his questions truthfully." The man agreed to the test. But soon serious doubts began to creep into the mind of the Soviet officer. The informant was calling up his sister every fifteen minutes for two hours, but nobody answered the telephone. Was he calling up the right number? Was he making a mockery of him? Suddenly the telephone was answered. The sister had just returned home. She was told to take a taxi and come right away, which she did. The woman was shocked by the strange confrontation with a foreigner and answered his questions in a quivering voice. But everything proved to be on the level. She showed her identity card from the Foreign Office and was even able to enumerate some of the papers which she had thus far transmitted to her brother. The persistence of the young officer paid, and it saved the NKVD intelligence a valuable source of information.

When the security police plant false informants, they have in mind the following aims:

To get in contact first with one Soviet intelligence agent and then, by putting him under close surveillance,

to find out the identity of other Soviet agents and the people they meet;

At a critical juncture in international relations mislead the Soviet policymakers with false and provocative information;

And, finally, to seize at least one Soviet intelligence agent with *stolen government papers in his possession,* arrest all of his known and suspected accomplices, and, after a thorough investigation, put them on trial.

To convict a man in a civilized country on a charge of espionage, substantial proof is needed, proof which can meet the requirements of the *law of evidence.* It is not enough for the police or the examining magistrate to be convinced that the suspect is a spy. The mere fact that a person has a false passport may be punishable according to law, but to convict him of espionage more weighty proof is needed. That is why police and other security agencies strive so hard to seize the suspect with the "goods"—with the material proof of espionage activity *in his possession.*

Soviet intelligence officers know this and are constantly reminded by Headquarters of the necessity of taking stringent measures to avoid being caught with incriminating documents. When a false informant has been successfully planted by the secret police, the police detectives know in advance when and where their man will meet the Soviet agent to turn over to him the "stolen" classified papers and the exact place and time when he will get these papers back from the agent. Knowing this, the police can easily seize the Soviet agent with the incriminating documents in his possession. This danger is always on the minds of the Soviet intelligence officers, but no matter what the risk, they



have to receive the secret papers from the informant and later return them to him. How to do it with the maximum of safety is the responsibility of the underground resident.

Every resident tries to solve this dilemma in his own way. But before discussing the ways and means of evading a trap, I shall introduce a few cases which illustrate how the police and counterintelligence agencies use a "plant" in order to catch the intelligence officer. One of the most notorious cases was that of a Russianized Pole Kazimir Baransky, an NKVD intelligence man, who served as second secretary of the Soviet embassy in Warsaw under the name of Kazimir Kobetsky. In 1923, when the Soviet government was deliberating a plan to send troops through Poland to Germany, Baransky received an order to blow up the stores of dynamite and munitions in the Warsaw fortress. Baransky carried out that dangerous assignment on October 12, 1923.

The Poles learned that the explosion in the Warsaw fortress had been engineered by their fellow Pole, Kazimir Kobetsky. But they did not demand his recall and decided to catch him in some other act and then take a full measure of revenge. Such an occasion presented itself only a year later. The Polish counterintelligence service managed with considerable ingenuity to plant an *agent provocateur* in Baransky's service—a clerk in the Polish Foreign Office. To whet Baransky's appetite the man began to supply the Soviet embassy with authentic documents from the Foreign Office. Gradually, the *agent provocateur* insinuated himself into Baransky's confidence, and Baransky began to meet him personally. One day in the summer of 1925, Kazimir Baransky was to meet the agent in order to return to

him several documents from the Polish Foreign Office, among which there was a very interesting report from the Polish ambassador in Japan, Patek. Finally, the Polish counterintelligence managed to lure its enemy into a trap.

When Baransky arrived at the meeting place, he noticed suspicious characters displaying a marked interest in him. Baransky tried to slip away, but the police detectives began to close in. He made a dash out of the encirclement, thinking only of how to get rid of the compromising documents in his pocket. Darting into a side street, he entered the Church of St. Catherine. There he knelt, shoved the papers into a pew, and left the church by another exit to Jerusalem Street. At that moment the agents, who had lost him, caught sight of him. They seized Baransky and subjected him to a thorough search. When they didn't find the expected documents, they became enraged and beat him. They trampled him with their boots and inflicted severe blows on his head and face. Baransky lost consciousness, and when he came to he found himself in police headquarters. Some time later, the diplomatic papers and Ambassador Patek's report from Tokyo were found in the church. This case created a furor. Angry diplomatic notes were exchanged between Moscow and Warsaw, and Baransky was recalled. Had he been an underground resident without the protection of a Soviet diplomatic passport, he would have been at the mercy of his enemies, and the Soviet government would have disclaimed any knowledge of him.

Before analyzing this case from the point of view of intelligence technique, I shall introduce another one that took place in Moscow a few years ago. The KGB (Soviet Committee of State Security) succeeded in



planting a false informant who insinuated himself into the confidence of the assistant military attaché of a leading Western country. One day, while riding in a crowded bus, the informant and the attaché silently exchanged packages. The attaché received from the informant a notebook and in turn gave him a package of what looked like a neat bundle of Soviet money. Someone in the bus raised a hue and cry and demanded to know what was in the packages. An obviously stage-managed commotion started, and the bus stopped. A band of police agents were, of course, on hand, waiting. They entered the bus—a mere block from his embassy—grabbed the attaché, dragged him out, roughed him up, threw him into a waiting car, and brought him into one of the police offices. There, alternating threats of physical violence and offers of large sums of money, they demanded that the attaché change sides and become a spy for the Soviets. The notebook received from the informant, they insisted, contained espionage information written in invisible ink. This was probably so, because the Soviet KGB had planted the notebook in the first place. The attaché was shaken by the violent ordeal, but did not yield. As a result, he was expelled from the Soviet Union. Had this man not been an official of a foreign embassy, but an underground agent, he would have disappeared and never been heard of again.

These two simple cases illustrate how the "plant" scheme works and how the trap is sprung. Now we can examine them more closely and see what mistakes were committed that led the intelligence officers to their debacles. In each case there were two major underlying faults:

Wishful thinking on the part of both intelligence

officers which made them trust planted counterspies, and;

failure of each officer to take proper measures to insure himself against being caught with incriminating material. And it must be underlined here that *there are effective means to thwart the actions of police detectives,* even when they are being helped by planted informers.

When intelligence officer Baransky was being chased by the Polish detectives, the one pulsating thought in his mind was how to get rid of the incriminating documents in his breast pocket. It is true that he had succeeded in outrunning his pursuers and jettisoning the ambassador's report and the other papers. But he could have been overtaken before he darted into the church. Baransky's belated wish not to have had the classified documents on himself could have been fulfilled had he foreseen the possibility of a trap and prepared for it.

What could he have done? How could he go to the meeting without taking the documents with him when the sole purpose of the meeting was to return the papers to the informant? Yes, Baransky could and should have gone there without the documents. Before setting out to keep the appointment, he ought to have given the documents to an aide with instructions to wait for him at a certain place, for instance in a suburban restaurant, three to five miles away. Then he could go to the meeting place. If the informant did not appear and Baransky were seized and searched, the police detectives would have found nothing on him and would have been completely frustrated. The very fact of the search would have given sufficient proof that the informant was a "plant," and the police would have lost



a valuable counterspy whom they had groomed and planted with such difficulty.

If the informant did come to the meeting and Baransky noticed that the place was surrounded by aggressive-looking detectives, he could tell the informant that he was unable to bring the documents and then part with him for good without ever returning the papers. If the meeting place seemed clear of detectives, Baransky could hail a taxi and take a pleasure ride with the informant along a quiet route—to see whether they were being trailed—and only then drive to the restaurant where the aide was waiting. There, Baransky could absent himself for a few minutes, pick up the documents, rejoin the informant, and return them to him.

In the case of the assistant attaché dragged out of the bus in Moscow, there were still bigger mistakes committed, and the manhandled official has to blame himself and those who had trained him for intelligence work for his misfortune. To pick a crowded bus for the transmittal of secret data and money is a blunder which defies all logic. The bus was utilized by the KGB (Committee of State Security) as a veritable mousetrap which afforded its detectives the possibility to observe the exchange of packages at close range, and at the same time the attaché was deprived of the possibility of changing his mind, retreating, or escaping. It is a pity that a man who had the stamina to withstand the initial shock and the brutal police coercion that followed did not get proper training in his own country.

There are two distinct moments when the secret police may spring the trap on the Soviet intelligence officer who has fallen for the bait. The first is, when the Rus-

sian meets the false informant to *take* the classified government data from him. The second moment is when the Russian comes back later to *return* the photographed documents to the "informant." Which of the two moments is the more dangerous?

Experience has shown that in countries where counterintelligence is ably conducted, the secret police prefer to seize and search the Soviet agent not when he receives the classified papers from the "informant," but when he comes to *return* them to him. Following these tactics, the police gain two advantages: (1) they can be 99 per cent sure that the Russian, who comes with the sole purpose of returning the documents, will have them in his possession when searched, and (2) the police can instruct the "informant" not to appear for the appointment and thus conceal his unsavory role in the whole affair. On the other hand, if the police try to apprehend the Russian at the moment he is receiving the documents from the "informant," the detectives—who must keep at a distance in order not to frighten the Russian away—may misinterpret a gesture or movement made by one or both men and swoop on the Russian and search him prematurely, only to find that he has not yet taken possession of the incriminating documents. There is also the danger, from the point of view of the police, that the Russian, having received the documents, may suddenly jump into a passing taxi or dart into the subway and slip away. Chasing him may end in failure, and after that the Russian would not walk into the same trap again.

In the case of the Soviet intelligence officer Baransky, I indicated how he could have thwarted the police detectives who searched him when he came to *return* the diplomatic papers to the false informant.



But a Soviet intelligence officer can also thwart the attempt of the police to seize him when he comes to *receive* the documents from the informant. This can be done in the following way: Even if the Soviet officer has complete confidence in the informant, he should never take the documents from him at the place where they have met. Instead, the officer should hail a passing taxi and together with the informant ride out of any possible encirclement, real or fancied, and only then, when he is completely sure that he is free from surveillance, should he take the incriminating documents.

In this connection we may recall the celebrated case of the Soviet intelligence officer Valentine Gubichev (formally an official of the U.N.) and Judy Coplon, employee of the U.S. Justice Department. When Gubichev had his last and fateful meeting with Miss Coplon in New York, he refrained from taking the secret reports which she had stolen for the Soviet because he was not sure whether both of them had come to the meeting place without being trailed by security agents. To find this out, he took a long walk with Miss Coplon, then they rode in subway trains and changed to a bus, but Gubichev still hesitated and did not touch the incriminating reports for fear that they might be shadowed. Finally, when the government agents apprehended and searched both of them, the report was found not in Gubichev's possession but in Miss Coplon's handbag, a circumstance which had an important bearing on the case. Gubichev apparently remembered his lessons from the intelligence school. He knew that he was obliged to check himself against possible surveillance and not to take the incriminating material unless he felt sure that he was not being

shadowed. But his mistake lay in the fact that when he met Judy Coplon and sensed that something was wrong, he did not take effective measures to shake off the surveillants. What he did was to ride endlessly with her in subway trains and buses, as if their trackers could not do the same thing.

The best remedy against bait-swallowing is common sense, suppression of wishful thinking, critical analysis of all available facts, and a sound appraisal of all the people involved. One more ingredient, which is possessed only by very few intelligence men, is intuition of a kind which is almost uncanny. Such men, who possess it, are usually called in for consultation in serious cases, when a final decision has to be taken.

But no matter how clever the intelligence officer is, he may some day meet his match in the person of a crafty and imaginative counterintelligence agent who will skillfully plant irresistible bait in his path and beat him at his own game. A counterintelligence agent of that caliber can devise and camouflage a trap with such ingenuity that even the most experienced eye will not detect the treacherous props and the fine threads leading to it. At no time will this counterintelligence agent push his adversary in the direction of the bait or introduce into the plot elements which may reveal somebody's sinister initiative behind it. On the contrary, the intended victim will be made to feel that nobody lures him anywhere and that he acts according to his free will and choice. The following case that took place in France years ago may serve as an example.

A young NKVD officer who worked in the underground in Paris, where he posed as a Czechoslo-



vakian national, enrolled in a course of anthropology at the Sorbonne for the purpose of improving his French. There he became acquainted with a French student, also studying anthropology. Both men were enthusiastic billiard players and often, after classes, they went out to play for an hour or two. In this way the Russian was able to converse in French. The French student was poor, and the Russian was glad to pay for the billiards and the drinks and would from time to time lend his friend a hundred francs. They never talked politics, but the Russian noticed that his friend was buying the socialist paper *Populaire*. One day the French student told the Russian that he would have to discontinue his studies for lack of money and look for a steady job to support himself and his ailing mother. In a somewhat embarrassed way he promised that some day he would repay to the Russian (whom he thought to be Czechoslovakian) the eight or so hundred francs he owed him. The Russian was touched and made him accept another five hundred francs "until better times." After that, the Frenchman discontinued coming to the lectures.

Then one Sunday, three months later, while strolling along the Avenue de l'Opéra the Russian caught sight of his French friend briskly crossing the broad avenue ahead of him. The Russian increased his pace and caught up with him on the other side of the avenue. Both were glad to see each other. The young Frenchman told his friend that with the help of his fiancée's father he got a job as a photographer at the Second Bureau of the General Staff of the Army and that, although he was photostating a lot of supposedly important papers and maps, the salary was too small for him to venture into marriage and at the same time

take care of his mother. His only hope, he said, was to find a better paying job. He wanted the Russian to meet his fiancée and gave him his telephone number. Both agreed to see each other soon.

The NKVD officer was struck by the unexpected opportunity which had suddenly knocked on his door. He knew that the NKVD intelligence had long been coveting the secrets locked up in the Second Bureau (military intelligence) of the French General Staff and hurried to the resident director to report the good news.

Both men discussed and analyzed the details of the officer's acquaintance and relations with the Frenchman. Here was a young man who badly needed a steady income sufficient to enable him to get married and take care of his ailing mother. The Russian officer was on a very friendly footing with him, and the *residentura* had the money necessary to bail his friend out of financial difficulties and help him get married and settled in comparative comfort. The fact that the young Frenchman was reading the socialist *Populaire* was also a welcome sign, because as a socialist he could hardly be an enemy of the Soviet Union and, moreover, a Russian Marxist and French socialist could always be counted on to find a common ground.

The perennial fear of a trap did not bother the resident and his officer. Nowhere could they find in the relations between the Soviet officer and the Frenchman a discordant note which would indicate that the friendship had been artificially contrived and nurtured. There was no trace of a possible "plant," because the young Frenchman had never asked him a tactless or prying personal question and had never said or done anything which could be intended as a decoy to inveigle the Russian into a trap. In their relations the



initiative was always on the side of the Russian. It was the Russian who first accosted the young man and talked to him—as he did to many at the Sorbonne. It was he who each time invited the French student to a game of billiards and to have a drink. Had the Russian not caught sight of the young man when the latter was crossing Avenue de l'Opera, their relations might have never been resumed. And again, it was not the Frenchman who stopped the Russian in the street, but the other way around.

The two intelligence officers discarded completely the possibility of a "plant." They decided to go ahead and devised a way in which the offer should be presented to the Frenchman. But before taking the final step, the resident advised the officer to accelerate his friendship with the young man still further, to meet his fiancée, and to try to learn the occupation and social position of her father, who was able to produce for his daughter's boy friend a job at the Deuxième Bureau. Meanwhile, a parallel check had been ordered and it disclosed that the father of the fiancée was an old army sergeant working in the war ministry as an office manager, with influence far beyond his low rank. The Russian officer met the girl of his friend and helped him finance the purchase of an engagement ring. Finally, it was decided that the time was ripe for the recruiting job, and the resident wrote a perfunctory report to Headquarters and was waiting for the green light to complete the operation.

In the meantime, an old Soviet informant who was an officer of the French Sûreté Générale (Secret Police) and who had been dropped by the Soviet "legal" *residentura* a year earlier for insubordination and other sins, got in touch with his former Soviet contact. This

informant was an agent of the Sûreté Générale in charge of narcotic violations, but had proved able in the past, soon after the sensational kidnapping by Soviet agents of the former tsarist General Koutiepov in Paris, to steal the whole file of the Sûreté on that kidnapping and bring it to the Soviet agents for photostating. He apparently missed the additional salary which he used to get from the Russians and wanted to be reinstated in their secret service. He brought with him an interesting memorandum which he had stolen from his place of work which showed that the Sûreté Générale had received information from one of its informants within the French Communist party that a certain Czechoslovakian by the name of X., who was residing in Paris and attending the Sorbonne, was in reality a Soviet national and agent of the Soviet intelligence service. It transpired from the memorandum further that the Sûreté had dispatched a young agent to the Sorbonne with instructions to enroll there as a student and get acquainted with the suspected Soviet agent.

This brilliant piece of counterintelligence work was thus revealed in the nick of time. The "legal" resident transmitted the information to Moscow, and the NKVD Headquarters immediately wired back to the underground resident an order to desist from the recruiting operation. The Soviet intelligence officer was ordered to leave and the group of his informants was "put on ice."

The resident and the intended victim of the trap could not but admire the subtle workmanship of the French inspector and the dissimulating skill of his young agent. Both Soviet officers noticed how cleverly the encounter on the Avenue de l'Opéra was stage



managed to make it look completely accidental, once more leaving the initiative to the Russian.

I have described this episode in some detail to show with what consummate skill bait can be planted and how deadly a small team of two counterintelligence men can be.

# XIII. Communications

The secret information gathered by the underground *residenturas* in foreign countries would be next to useless if it could not be channeled speedily to Moscow and, duly processed, presented to the policy-making organs of the Soviet government. The maintenance of efficient communications between the intelligence apparatus in Moscow and its underground ramifications all over the world is, therefore, of paramount importance. During the first years, when the underground rings abroad were being created, the problem of communications was an easy one. At that time the underground *residenturas* were serviced by the diplomatic couriers of the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, via the Soviet embassies. The Foreign Department of the NKVD used to send its mail to the underground rings in foreign countries by addressing it in care of the "legal" resident at the Soviet embassy. The legal resident would then notify the underground resident and transmit to him the mail through a reliable contact. The underground resident, in his turn, would use the same channel to dispatch his mail to headquarters in Moscow, via the Soviet embassy and the diplomatic pouch.

From the point of view of safety and speed, this method of communication was the easiest and the most effective. However, it had its limitations. The underground *residenturas* were organized to function not only in peace time, but in war time as well, and if they depended exclusively on the embassy's diplomatic pouch for communication with Moscow, they would find themselves cut off completely, the moment the diplomatic relations between the country where the *residentura* is located and the Soviet Union had been broken off. Even in peace time, the connection of the underground with the diplomatic courier service is considered undesirable, because it contradicts the basic premise on which the creation of underground intelligence has been predicated. The principal reason why the underground *residenturas* were created at all was that the Soviet government wanted to be able to disclaim all responsibility for the espionage activity of its agents in case they were caught.



As a result of a number of adjustments and reorganizations, there exist today four channels of communications between the KGB intelligence and its *residenturas* abroad:

*The Diplomatic Courier Line* which connects the Home Office, in Moscow, with its legal *residenturas* abroad, based in Soviet embassies.

*The Direct Underground Line,* through which communications flow from the Home Office in Moscow direct to underground *residenturas* in a number of countries and back.

*The Indirect Underground Line,* along which communications flow between Moscow and the underground through an *Intermediate Underground Mail Station* in a country adjacent to the one in which the recipient *residentura* is situated. For instance, the mail from Moscow to the underground *residentura* in Rome is taken first to an underground mail station in Lau-

sanne, Switzerland, and from there to its final destination in Rome.

*The Mixed Line,* through which the mail proceeds from Moscow *by diplomatic pouch* to the Soviet embassy in a foreign country, and from there *by underground courier* to the underground *residentura* in an adjacent country. For example, the mail assigned to the underground *residentura* in Berlin goes by the diplomatic pouch to the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen. From there it is taken by an underground courier to the underground *residentura* in Berlin.

The intermediate underground mail stations are set up preferably in small countries—Switzerland, Holland, or Denmark—which have been regarded for many decades as territories not likely to be drawn into a war between great powers. The intermediate stations stand a better chance to function undisturbed in traditionally neutral countries, which explains why a country like Switzerland is a hotbed of espionage activity and international intrigue in every big war. The intermediate underground mail station has no intelligence operations of its own and acts only as a "letter drop" and a courier service for short distances. It serves underground *residenturas* in one or more adjacent countries where the real espionage work is being done. It is manned mostly by one or more native citizens of the neutral country, often a man and wife ideologically devoted to the Soviet Union but not known as communists. They have especially contrived hiding places for the mail they transmit, but they do not know what is in it. They do not even see the little slides or rolls of film concealed in a binding of a book, toilet accessory, or in any other innocent-looking object. Now microfilms can be hidden in hollowed out



tiny objects like cufflinks, jewelry, coins, etc. In time of war the mail station may harbor also a radio man and a transmitter.

As a rule, the operators of the mail station do not know the underground residents or the members of their staffs personally. If they have something to transmit, they notify the *residentura* by calling up a certain telephone number, or sending a telegram or picture post card to a certain address. The character of the picture may denote a special message. A sea view may mean one thing, mountains—something else, and various kinds of animals or flowers—many other things. Usually, the *residentura* sends a courier to the town where the mail station is situated to pick up the messages from Moscow or to deliver its mail for the Home Office. But sometimes, the mail station delivers the mail to the *residentura* by courier.

One of the most difficult tasks in securing the underground lines of communications is to select couriers who can justify their frequent trips to various countries and who are at the same time completely reliable. In view of such requirements, the Soviet intelligence has to acquire couriers from a variety of sources and social strata. They are more frequently drawn from sailors of the merchant marine. Next to the sailors come the couriers recruited from among the flying personnel of commercial air lines who crisscross the world in every direction. The most valued of them are the pilots themselves. Then comes the category of real and sham business agents who travel in behalf of their companies.

Women play an active part in that branch of service. A number of them have been drawn from the communist milieu among whom there were quite a few divorced wives of foreign communist bigwigs. Men and

women of American nationality are favored most for the courier service because their American passports open for them the door to many countries without the need to ask for visas, and, besides, Americans have come to be regarded so much as world travelers that the immigration officers of European and Asiatic countries are not surprised at all if an American lady pops up again and again with her little pet dog on their borders. Foreign journalists, who work for the Soviet intelligence, are often used as unscheduled couriers. And because the journalistic profession serves as an excellent cover for worldwide travel, many underground couriers, who had never had anything to do with journalism, travel under the guise of newspaper correspondents with false credentials from well-known and unknown publications.

When the courier arrives at his destination, he calls up the respective "letter drop," delivers the package, and picks up the mail, if any, for the return journey. The Soviet intelligence maintains a large network of such points in many countries, especially in large ports. The "letter drops" are not encumbered by any organizational forms and do not require a special cover or camouflage. The "letter drop" receives the mail once or twice a month, hides it until an authorized person, with proper credentials and password, comes to pick it up. The person who takes care of the "letter drop" is not obliged to be in attendance the whole day. It is enough for him or her to be near the phone for two hours daily.

Couriers prefer "letter drops" located in stores, restaurants, offices, and other places of business because these are open all day. An owner of a delicatessen store can manage the "letter drop" business by devoting to it not more than a few hours a month. The



principal requirement is that the persons in charge of the "letter drops" should be politically reliable and scrupulously honest.

As a rule, new couriers and persons in charge of "letter drops" are subjected, without their knowledge, to a number of tests before real mail is entrusted to their care. For a period of several months they handle dummy packages which do not contain any mail. Later, the packages are examined in a laboratory to determine whether those who handled them made any attempts to look into them. Occasionally, a package is fashioned to look like a solid bundle of dollar bills, and there were a few instances when sailors were tempted to steal the "money" which was not there. Realizing that they have been trapped, the culprits drop out of the service as quietly as possible. Some of them try to repair the damage by resealing the packages, but their crude efforts cannot save them from exposure. As a matter of fact, real money is often forwarded in the same way, but I have never heard of any theft.

There is one more line of communications designed especially to meet the rigorous requirements of wartime intelligence on the territory of the enemy. As is known, an intelligence agent captured in the rear of the enemy lines is not considered a prisoner of war. There are no laws which can protect him. All means, including torture, are employed to break his will and extort from him the names and whereabouts of the other members of the ring. The end is death before a firing squad.

Human endurance is limited, and no one can be sure of his own (or anyone else's) capacity to withstand

prolonged physical torture. Thus, the arrest of one man may spell ruin to all his accomplices. Such a situation has driven the chiefs of the Soviet intelligence to seek a way to reduce personal contact among the members of the same ring to the bare minimum and to organize intelligence operations in such a manner that the majority of the agents who take part in the same operation should not know one another, should not meet, and should not know each other's addresses. The idea behind it was, that if a man does not know something he will not be able to divulge it. To comprehend the scheme, as the Soviet intelligence chiefs envisaged it, one must imagine an orchestra consisting of blindfolded musicians brought together in a dark room and playing the same piece without knowing or seeing each other.

How can one speak to another without each seeing the other, how can one contact the other without knowing the other's address? These were the difficulties which had to be overcome. Finally, the KGB intelligence chiefs came up with a plan that had been partly borrowed from the Intelligence Department of the Red Army. It contained the following features:

1) Coded messages take the place of personal talks.

2) Hiding places, such as a hollow in a tree (a cache, in Russian intelligence lingo, *"doubok"*), or a deep crack in the wall of a building, or a hole bored in a public monument, take the place of mailing addresses.

3) A special system of "indicators" is used to orient each agent as to the specific hiding place where a message is awaiting him and where he should deposit collected information. The "indicator" consists of a



number or a symbol written on a wall, park bench, or somewhere inside a railway station, post office, or public telephone booth.

4) Every agent appears on certain days, at a certain hour at a pay telephone booth, where he is called up by his superior and given general instructions.

Thus, according to this plan, an agent takes a walk in the city, looks up the number of the hiding place marked on the wall of a certain building, then goes to that hiding place and, if the coast is clear, picks up the message, deposits his material, and later returns to wipe off the number of the hiding place on the wall and replace it with a cross to show that he has already picked up the message. In case of a misunderstanding, or complication which cannot be cleared up through an exchange of messages, the agent avails himself of the forthcoming "pay telephone" conversation with his superior.

Sometimes, together with the messages, a bundle of money is deposited for the agent, or, if the sum of money is too large, buried in a prearranged spot somewhere in a suburban forest, where the proper agent will later dig it up.

During the last war, in which this system was tried out, still another innovation was added by the KGB intelligence. It consisted of tiny magnetic steel boxes which attach themselves firmly to metal objects. Such a little box, with microfilms inside it, can be stuck on a telegraph pole or post office box, to be picked up later by the proper agent.

The whole system of blind co-operation by phantom agents who do not see each other is far from ideal. A conspiratorial message or a bundle of money left to be picked up by an agent in a crack of a wall or a hollow

of a tree can be washed out by a torrential rain or dragged out by squirrels, and if this happens in public view it may attract the attention of the authorities. Burying money in a forest—or digging it up—may accidentally be observed by a chance stroller whose presence is hidden by the trees and bushes. If we examine the pros and cons of this system, we will have to come to the conclusion that for wartime conditions it may have some merits. But for times of peace, with few exceptions, personal contacts between agents are not only preferable but indispensable.

# XIV. Chinks in the Agent's Armor

When an underground resident, or another member of the *residentura,* suddenly discovers that he is being shadowed or that his mail has been tampered with, he knows that the government security agencies are after him. This is the time when he must think fast, assess the situation, and make instantaneous decisions concerning himself and the safety of his associates and the members of the network. The officer cancels or drops his appointments, destroys all documentary and material vestiges of his conspiratorial work, and takes a number of other steps provided for emergency situations. Whether the officer withdraws temporarily into a hide-out until things have cleared up, or flees the country, the disturbing questions inevitably arise: What has prompted the police to put him under surveillance? How much do the police know about him? Could it be that there is a traitor within the Soviet network? Have the police succeeded in trailing the officer to his meetings with other members of the ring? Many other questions demand an immediate answer. Only when the *residentura* is manned by highly qualified officers, who strictly observe the conspiratorial rules of intelligence and operate with clocklike precision, can the trouble spot be quickly found. Otherwise, the *residentura* may be demobilized for a long time by fears and doubts extending in every direction.

The search for the trouble spot or weak link within the intelligence organization can be likened to the checking of a break in the electric wiring of a warship. All the components of the *residentura* with its broad network of informants are carefully re-examined, analyzed, and secretly tested. But sometimes the most minute check-up will not reveal the cause of the trouble for the simple reason that it may lie outside the sphere of the intelligence organization and its operations. The cause may be hidden in the private lives of the intelligence officers with their personal weaknesses and transgressions, which in the unsafe conditions of the underground may involve them in trouble. I have in mind first of all romantic attachments in which some Russian intelligence officers get themselves entangled as a result of their longing to find relief from the tense and lonely life in the grim atmosphere of the underground.

This is a serious problem. The history of the KGB underground knows quite a few cases in which an intelligence officer, while on a protracted assignment in a foreign land, fell in love with a woman who had no idea of her lover's real identity, occupation, or even nationality. There were instances, though rare ones, when such romantic attachments led to matrimony and the disruption of a previous marriage.

Infatuated girls tend to close their eyes to strange discrepancies that may transpire in the life story and behavior of the man they love, but their parents worry over the future of their daughters. When parents see that their daughter has seriously involved herself with a foreigner, they want to know more about him and make sure that he is an honorable man, at least not a bigamist, and that he will be able to support a wife and family. The parents are prone to start a little investigation of their own, sometimes through the good offices of the pastor of their church, who writes to his counterpart in the other country, and sometimes through the family lawyer and even through a regular detective's office. This is the juncture at which the fireworks are likely to erupt, as can be seen from the following story.



One Soviet resident who was working in the underground in Hitler's Germany, where he posed as a Canadian, was tipped off by the elevator man of his apartment house that a detective had come to the house and made inquiries about him. The news came as a shock. The resident was in the midst of an important recruiting operation of great potentialities. Was there a connection between both things? Could it be that the Gestapo had outwitted him and smoked him out of his shell with tempting bait? According to the way the recruitment had originated and developed, this looked most improbable. But what was it that caused the detective's visit?

In the meantime, all precautionary measures, prescribed for such occasions, were taken. A warning was sent out to the other members of the *residenturas*. Each officer checked and rechecked all his possessions to eliminate and destroy everything that tended to compromise him. Several projects were put off. New channels for emergency communications were set up. The resident left the city ostensibly on business, but in reality he repaired to the estate of a wealthy but reliable friend of Russia which was considered a safe haven. All his energy was now concentrated on finding the source of the leak which led to the detective's visit. Moscow was duly informed about the situation. The resident hoped to find the key to the mystery through an informant who worked at the Gestapo. However, the

clarification came from entirely unexpected quarters: from Moscow itself.

The resident, who was posing in Berlin as a Canadian businessman from Montreal, had a love affair with a young German girl. Seeing how seriously she was infatuated with the foreigner, the parents of the girl decided to check up on their prospective son-in-law and instructed a German private detective to find out everything possible about the beau of their daughter and about his family in Canada. Accordingly, the German detective wrote to a well-known detective bureau in Montreal. The Canadian detective approached the sister of our Canadian businessman. She was greatly surprised when the detective inquired about her younger brother Joseph, who had been killed in an accident some fifteen years back. She assured the detective that he was on the wrong track and that the man in Berlin was not her brother. About two weeks later the detective came to her again. He was puzzled by strange coincidences and asked her to help him unravel the mystery. As it has turned out, the Joseph who lived in Berlin was born on the same day as her late brother and attended the same preparatory school in Toronto. The detective told her also that two years earlier a Canadian passport had been issued in Ottawa to her brother's double and that in his application he had named a certain Julius as his brother. Did she know Julius?—Of course, she did. Julius was her older brother, a lawyer. The woman was shocked and hurried with the detective to the office of her brother. The brother listened to the story in amazement and said he could not figure it out. However, as soon as the detective left, the brother, who was privy to the whole affair, got in touch with the Soviet embassy and warned



the "comrades" that their man in Berlin was in serious trouble. The Soviet legal resident at the embassy cabled the story to Moscow, and Moscow wired to the underground resident in Berlin that he should get out of Germany at once.

There is one other area in which underground officers display impermissible lightmindedness and an amazing disregard of their own safety. As has been made clear in these pages, one of the main preoccupations of the underground officer is to protect his fraudulently acquired identity from exposure. A lot of spade work goes into the selection and acquisition of a false passport for the officer. Much ingenuity is applied to invent a plausible biography and build a secure business cover for him. Years of training have been spent to make a skillful operative of him and to instill in him the importance of vigilance in the conspiratorial craft of intelligence. And yet, all caution is suddenly thrown to the wind the moment the underground officer buys an automobile! It is enough for a curious informant or a police detective, who tries to pick up the trail of the Russian agent, to catch sight of the automobile license plates, and he can quickly get a lowdown on the Soviet officer, including his name, address, nationality, and so on. It was in this way that one underground resident was tracked down and arrested by the German Gestapo after a Western journalist, who had known him in Russia as an NKVD chief, jotted down the number of his license plates and turned it over to the police. After that incident the head of the NKVD warned the underground residents that for them to drive a car in a foreign country was tantamount to inscribing their names and addresses on their fore-

heads for everyone to see. But the admonition was largely disregarded. Soviet officers proved simply unable to resist the temptation of enjoying the convenience of a personal car, and Moscow could not—and did not really try hard enough to—enforce its ban. Gradually, a compromise of sorts was worked out. Underground officers were forbidden to ride in their cars to meeting places with informants and were advised to avoid as much as possible using their cars in the city proper. To decrease the chance of being recognized while driving in populated areas, the officers began to don caps and dark glasses, but these things are, of course, ineffectual expedients.

Still another weakness in the psychological make-up of the underground resident leads him to violate one of the cardinal rules of security. This weakness stems from the lonely life he lives in a hostile environment of a foreign land, away from his family, friends, and country. According to security rules, underground residents are strictly forbidden to associate with anyone from the local Soviet embassy or with other underground residents who happen to operate, or visit, in the same area. However, being eager to learn the latest news from home and to have an intimate talk with a friend or colleague, the residents often violate the rule when an opportunity to see someone from the KGB intelligence presents itself.

In some countries, residents began to meet each other at regular intervals and formed a sort of clearinghouse where they exchanged news from home, intelligence shoptalk, and gossip. This was kept a secret from Moscow. However, in 1935 two scandalous incidents took place which put an end to these transgressions. The more serious one occurred in Germany,



when one evening an NKVD underground resident was entertaining two of his friends in his flat—the underground resident in Prague, who had arrived in Berlin for a few days, and an attaché of the Soviet embassy in Berlin, who was the NKVD legal resident in Germany. While the three friends were sipping coffee and enjoying an interesting conversation, the doorbell rang out rather shrilly, and three young Gestapo officers appeared. They asked permission to inspect the premises and wanted to see the identification papers of those present. The men produced their passports: one had a Soviet diplomatic passport, the second a Swedish, and the third a Czechoslovakian. The officers jotted down the names, copied a few details from the Soviet passport and left. When the two Russian guests attempted to leave, they found that the exit from the house was blocked and that the street was full of police cars. They had to return to their friend's flat.

The next day the Russian tenant of the flat learned from his neighbors that the Gestapo agents had inspected in the same way all the apartments in the whole block. Either the Gestapo was looking for somebody, or this was a Nazi exercise in mass searches. Whichever it was, it looked unpleasant. Such a thing could not be concealed from Headquarters, and Moscow recalled both underground residents.

Another typical transgression nurtured by the same feeling of homesickness and nostalgia consisted of the habit of underground officers of keeping letters received from their families back home (which arrive in the form of microfilms) for long periods of time, instead of destroying them after reading them. Many underground officers are simply unable to part with such missives, especially if they have been scribbled by their

little children. I have seen such a letter, shown to me by one of the bravest, and I thought toughest, men I had ever known. The letter had a contour drawing of a little child's hand with an inscription in Russian, obviously made by the mother. It read: "Daddy, see how big my hand is now. I shall be two years old tomorrow. I already walk and talk. Please, daddy, come home. Your little Ninochka." The officer's eyes welled with tears. He kept the snapshot with the imprint of his child's hand in his wallet as a kind of talisman and did not want to destroy it, come what might.

And yet, there were instances when the discovery of such a photo-letter during the arrest of an underground operative on a charge of espionage served to confirm the allegation of the prosecution that the arrested man was a Russian and conducted his espionage work in behalf of the Soviet Union. For that reason, most of the underground *residenturas* conduct their correspondence with Moscow not in Russian but in some foreign language. Moscow, on its part, follows suit. In accordance with security regulations, the resident and his officers do not keep secret documents in their possession a minute longer than necessary to get them under way through secret channels to Moscow. The only exception which some residents make at their own peril and in defiance of the security rules is that, when they send to Moscow each month a detailed financial account of the *residentura's* expenses, they retain a photocopy of the account until they have received a confirmation from Moscow that the account had been approved. Since it takes about a month to get the confirmation from Headquarters, the keeping of a photocopy of the *residentura's* expenses twelve months a year is a risky matter, as one NKVD resident



learned to his sorrow when the Italian secret police apprehended him and his wife in Milan with the financial records of the *residentura* in their possession. However, even after this debacle in Italy, the financial data continued to be kept by two leading residents who did not see eye to eye with the NKVD intelligence chiefs on matters of intelligence policy and who were afraid that the financial accounts they forwarded to Moscow might be maliciously "mislaid" there, in which case they might be confronted, many months later, with a demand to account for some twenty thousand dollars in past expenses. The two resident directors apparently mistrusted their own chiefs more than they feared the chiefs of the foreign counterspy agencies.

# XV. Guerrilla Warfare

In chapter II, defining the basic lines of activity of the KGB Intelligence, I pointed out that the KGB was also in charge of Guerrilla Warfare.

Although by its very nature guerrilla operations ought to have been under the command of the Red Army, this branch of warfare was since the days of the Russian Civil War so closely interrelated with intelligence operations that it has been recognized as the responsibility of the organs of the KGB.

There are two major types of guerrilla wars: One is a war of *national liberation* waged by bands of the civilian population against a foreign invader. The other is an armed struggle of an outraged segment of the people *against the injustices of the internal regime*. The fierce struggle which had been waged by bands of Russian peasants against the invading armies of Napoleon in 1812 may serve as an example of the first type of guerrilla warfare. The rebellion of the Cuban farmers against the oppressive regime of Fulgencio Batista is a classic example of the second type. We are witnessing now new attempts by disillusioned Cubans to organize guerrilla resistance to the totalitarian regime of Castro.

During the first phases of its development, the guerrilla force is infinitely smaller and weaker than the forces of the oppressive regime inside the country.



Whereas the armies of the government may comprise tens of thousands of troops, with artillery, tanks, and aircraft, the burgeoning guerrilla force may consist of but a few hundred poorly armed men who would be wiped out in a matter of hours, had they not had two significant and far-reaching advantages: (1) the support of the local population and (2) the inaccessibility of their fortress-like refuge in the mountains or in the forests. I have put the support of the local population ahead of the inaccessible sanctuary because the history of guerrilla warfare has shown that without the help of the population guerrilla fighters are doomed, whereas, if the terrain where they operate has no natural defenses, they still can hide behind the people and, if hopelessly surrounded, dissolve themselves among the population. During the Russian Civil War, the guerrillas led by the Ukrainian nationalist and anarchist Makhno, who fought both the Reds and the Whites, played hide and seek with the punitive expeditions of his enemies, but when surrounded they would hide their rifles and assume the appearance of peaceful peasants tilling the field, tending the horses or mending the roofs. The pursuers would be told by the inhabitants that a guerrilla band of about so many men had just passed hurriedly by and made its way through this or that ravine or to the reed-covered banks of the river.

Peaceful peasants and other groups of hard-working people do not take up arms so lightly against superior forces of the government, unless they have been driven to it by unendurable hardships, onerous taxation, property confiscations, and naked violence. Before armed resistance succeeds in gaining land reforms and concessions from greedy landlords and corrupt government, peaceful life is disrupted, the rural economy

is disorganized, trade is at a standstill, whole communities are devastated, and lives are destroyed. It is because the injustices and sufferings have reached the boiling point that the most desperate and determined men take whatever weapons they can lay their hands on—from fowling pieces to axes and clubs—and retire into the hills and the woods, from where they stage fierce raids on the estates of their feudal overlords and local police outposts. The men become outlaws. The authority of the government is defied. Punitive detachments of rural police arrive to track them down. People suspected of aiding the rebels are persecuted. Many are arrested. Order is gradually restored. The authorities learn from the population that the outlaws have fled to another county. But when everything seems quiet and the detachments are getting ready to depart, the rebels come down from the hills in the middle of the night, overwhelm the sentries, destroy the police force, and make away with their rifles and ammunition. The population begins to regard the guerrilla band not only as a fighting unit, but also as a political entity united by the ideal of freeing the inhabitants from the arbitrary rule of the landlords and their feudalistic regime.

Before long, army units arrive to quell the rebellion. Martial law is proclaimed. The troops invade the hills, are drawn deeper into them by the retreating rebels until the soldiers find themselves before an inaccessible mountain position, from behind which the rebels cut them down with rifle fire and homemade grenades. Beaten and exhausted, the surviving soldiers return to their quarters. The rebels pick up the rifles, machine guns, and ammunition of the fallen men. The guerrilla war is now on . . .



The rebels live off the land. The local population supports them with food, clothes, footwear, and above all with accurate intelligence. The guerrillas know of every move made by the troops, their exact strength and location, and the arrival of reinforcements. On the other hand, the government troops are hampered by the complete inability to obtain information about the movements of the guerrillas and are often misled altogether by misinformation. The command of the troops resents the silent co-operation between the population and the rebels and begins to apply repressive measures toward the inhabitants. As a result, many of the younger people flee to the hills, thus swelling the number of the guerrillas. The inability of the government to quash the rebellion and the daring forays staged by the guerrillas make for their popularity. The guerrilla war grows and spreads to the adjoining districts.

One of the basic principles of guerrilla strategy is to inflict the maximum of casualties on the adversary with minimum loss to the rebels. To achieve this the guerrillas should never accept battle with superior enemy forces. They must offset the superiority of the enemy by cunning planning, deception, and even outright perfidy. They must hit the enemy where and when least expected and, having administered a stunning blow, disengage themselves before the enemy has had time to recover and regroup for a counterblow. They must make good use of their familiarity with the terrain to harass the enemy during the night and to intercept and attack his moving columns on the roads. They must plant false informers for the purpose of deceiving the enemy and luring him into prearranged traps.

Surprise, mobility, sharp attacks, and quick with-

drawals are the principles of guerrilla tactics. The guerrillas must seek engagements with the enemy under conditions of their own choosing and concentrate the attack on the enemy's rear and flanks. The motto of the guerrilla strategists is: "Our front is their (the enemy's) rear." Guerrillas must harass the enemy continually and terrorize him especially at night, making him feel that guerrillas lurk behind every bush. How effective a night operation can be, may be seen from the following incident that took place in Spain during the Civil War in the 1930's.

A squad of fifteen guerrillas armed with hand grenades, single shot carbines, and a few tommy guns stole toward an enemy army column of about 400 men encamped for the night near the road, some thirty miles behind the front line. The troops arrived with an assignment to combat the Republican guerrillas on a sector of the front which had been inactive for over two months and which was favored by the guerrillas for crossings into enemy territory. The guerrillas crawled toward the camp, Indian fashion, from two sides. One sentry was disposed of in silence. The other was nowhere to be seen and was probably fast asleep. Then, two Molotov cocktails were thrown at the tents, which ignited and lit up the whole area. About a dozen hand grenades were immediately thrown into the tents as the soldiers ran out completely bewildered by the roaring explosions. Only a few of them had guns in their hands, and they shot right and left at their own men. A few more grenades were flung into the band of panicked men. Many lay dead and wounded. Some of the men ran into the path of the guerrillas and were picked off by single carbine shots. The guerrillas withdrew without suffering a single casualty.



Guerrillas do not fight to seize real estate. They do not capture or defend fixed positions as do regular army units in conventional wars. Were they to try to do so, they would be surrounded by superior forces and annihilated. Until the guerrillas have succeeded in evolving into a big military force organized along regular army lines, their role must be limited to harassing and weakening the enemy by wiping out his small columns, bothering the big ones, attacking his bases and arsenals, plundering his supply convoys, disrupting his lines of communications, upsetting his operations, and forcing him to divert considerable forces in order to protect his every step. A thing which is considered despicable in the regular army, such as running away from the enemy, is not a shameful act at all in guerrilla warfare. On the contrary, the guerrilla fighter is trained to run fast and is encouraged to kill as many enemies as he can by a surprise assault and to run for his life, because the motto of the guerrilla fighters is: *"Kill the enemy and survive yourself."*

The guerrillas must guard the approaches to their own base day and night. Avenues to the base must be blocked by obstacles, escape routes kept open. A sufficient number of men must be on guard duty at all times. Only especially selected men should have access to the stores of ammunition and supplies. The constant presence of a physician must be secured and, if a doctor cannot be persuaded to join the guerrillas, he must be drafted against his will. Guerrillas must also secure the help of other physicians in the near-by settlements and arrange to have a certain number of beds in a hospital or private homes. Medical supplies are obtained principally from the ambushed supply columns of the enemy.

As new volunteers and men fleeing from police persecution flock to the guerrilla camp, new guerrilla units are formed under the command of veterans, and new bases are established. The new outfits carry out their raids independently of each other, but they must coordinate their daily operations and divide the targets among themselves in order not to blunder at night into armed clashes with each other.

Loyalty and comradeship are the cement that holds guerrillas together. A comrade should never be abandoned in distress. A good commander must see to it that conflicts and quarrels arising among his men should be resolved before they cause serious damage. The members of the outfit must be well indoctrinated as to the purpose of the struggle and their responsibility to the population and the nation as a whole. Many guerrillas have a tendency to think that if they fight in defense of the rights of the people, they are entitled to gratuities from the people. Some of the men go so far as to "confiscate," in the name of the guerrilla unit, things which they covet for themselves. Such abuses, if widely practiced, may alienate the population and cause great harm. It is impossible to hold a guerrilla band in line without rigorous discipline. Misdemeanors and moral transgressions are best dealt with by a "Comradely Court," elected by the members of the gang. Serious breaches of discipline must be dealt with by the commander himself. Treason, if it has been proved beyond any doubt, is punished by death.

If the majority of the population consists of poor farmers and the country is very small and if the guerrillas have competent political leaders, the chances are that the guerrilla operations will culminate in a triumphant revolution. However, if the country is large and possesses a fairly developed industry and a strong middle class, the government will succeed in blockading and quarantining the guerrilla area until the impoverished population is no longer able to sustain the guerrilla fighters. Punitive expeditions will finally stamp out the rebellion. Partial concessions and reforms will then be introduced to pacify the area.



Whereas intelligence operations are conducted by the organs of the KGB continually in time of peace and in time of war, guerrilla operations are carried out only in wartime and in semiwar situations. The organs of the KGB were in the guerrilla business as early as 1919–20, during the Russian Civil War and the Russo-Polish War of the same period. The operations of the guerrilla detachments against the Poles consisted mainly of infiltrating the rear of the enemy and staging night raids on the headquarters of Polish army units, killing the commanders, and making off with army maps, war plans and other data concerning the strength and disposition of the Polish forces. Occasionally, the guerrilla detachments succeeded in bringing back to the Soviet side a "tongue"—a captured Polish staff officer who could disclose additional information. On one such occasion, a Soviet guerrilla outfit captured the commander of all the Polish guerrilla forces, Colonel Senkovsky, who had arrived at the front to supervise the crossing to the Russian side of about forty Polish officers and Savinkov [1] agents who were given the assignment to head a force of about

1 Boris Savinkov, famous Russian revolutionary and terrorist who helped the French, British, and Polish general staffs to fight the Soviet state with subversion.

8000 Ukrainian anti-Soviet rebels and deserters who hid in the forests and to strike at the rear of the Twelfth Red Army, which was at that time in full retreat. The other important task of the Soviet guerrilla detachments in the Russo-Polish War was to disrupt the enemy's communications by blowing up bridges, railway tracks, power installations, and telephone and telegraph lines. As a rule, Soviet guerrillas act as an auxiliary force and co-ordinate their operations with those of the regular army.

The experience gained by the Soviet guerrilla troops in the Russo-Polish War became the cornerstone of the Soviet guerrilla science of the future. Sixteen years later, in 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, the former commander of the Soviet guerrilla troops in the Russo-Polish War was sent by the Russian Politburo to Spain, where he organized and directed for the Republican government of Spain guerrilla detachments which operated in the rear of Franco's forces.

The guerrilla operations in Spain began in a rather modest way with the organization of two saboteur schools for about two hundred men each, one in Madrid and the other in Benimamet, near Valencia. Later, four more schools were added, one of which, in Barcelona, numbered six hundred men. The trainees were young Spaniards, selected from the Republican Army, with a sprinkling of German communists from the International Brigade and about eighty former Russian tsarist officers who hoped to earn the right to return to their motherland. They were trained principally in various kinds of demolition work, high-grade marksmanship, elementary guerrilla tactics (raids and ambushes), map reading, living off the land, and long marches with loads up to twenty-five pounds. On



graduation each trainee had to be able to plan and execute the demolition (on contact or by remote control) of various types of bridges, railway tracks, and power lines, and to mine roads.

The saboteurs, in groups of seven or nine, would cross into enemy territory by night on an inactive sector of the front with well-defined assignments. Each commando unit would set out for its destination, carefully by-passing inhabited points, walking by night, and hiding and resting by day. The commandos would blow up a bridge or mine the railway track and wait for the military train to pass. They would watch the explosion and the resultant wreck from a distance, hiding in the grass, bushes, or rocks. Knowing that an army emergency squad would arrive at the scene, the saboteurs would mine the road some two hundred yards from the train wreck, and when the troop-carrying trucks were on the fatal spot they would be blown up. Mission accomplished, the commandos would then return to the Republican side. The recrossing of the front into Republican territory was not a simple operation and had to be carefully prepared. According to instructions, the saboteurs had to approach the Republican front line at a certain spot and give a prearranged signal so that they should not be fired upon. They had to be careful not to err to the right or left of the prearranged crossing point. The army battalion at that sector would be warned not to shoot at a little group of men expected to come from the enemy territory in all probability during the night or at daybreak. Sometimes the saboteurs would be prevented from returning to the prearranged line because during their absence that line would suddenly become alive with action and counteraction and they would have to look

for a quieter crossing place and take a chance that the uninformed soldiers would take a few potshots at them. The commandos would usually send ahead one man with a white flag. There was a standard joke among the guerrillas that this man would do well to recite the well-known prayer: "O, Lord, save me from my friends. From my enemies I will protect myself."

Gradually, the incursions became routine and saboteur groups began to make inroads into the enemy's territory on a wide front. On the Madrid sector alone, not fewer than five teams crossed into the enemy's rear every night, and after the first three months of operation at least 40 per cent of the bridges and power lines, within sixty kilometers from the front, were down. The enemy was seriously disturbed, and special army units were assigned to combat the new menace of "Marxist guerrilleros," as they were referred to in General Franco's orders.

The Republican guerrilla force grew fast, and by the summer of 1937 its operations became more sophisticated. Guerrilla commandos had assignments not only to destroy lines of communications but to harass the enemy deeper in his territory by attacking arsenals and ambushing moving columns and supply convoys. To do that, more detailed information was needed as to the location of the enemy garrisons and arsenals and the movements of his troops. For that purpose Republican army units were searched for men whose families lived in the territory occupied by the Nationalists within 150 kilometers from the front. These men were transferred from the army to the guerrilla troops, and after a short intensive course of training and indoctrination they were sent to visit their families and, where possible, to stay with them and collect the



necessary intelligence. Thus, assisted by inside knowledge, a group of some fifty guerrillas (a platoon) would swoop down in the middle of the night on the garrison barracks, housing ten times as many men, and pelt them with hand grenades, incendiary bombs, and machine gun fire, completely paralyzing their ability to resist and inflicting heavy casualties on them. Then, faithfully following the guerrilla tradition, the attackers would suddenly withdraw and disappear into the night. At the same time, other groups were attacking other targets elsewhere.

One night, an enemy supply convoy of twelve trucks was ambushed and destroyed some 120 kilometers inside the enemy rear. Two or three of the trucks were loaded with canned food. Considering the acute shortage of food in the country, it was quite natural for the inhabitants of near-by villages to help themselves to the cans that were scattered along the road. In the morning, an army detachment arrived. The military police searched the homes in the village nearest to the scene, and in some of them found cans and a few army blankets stolen from the ambushed convoy. The military authorities regarded this as sufficient proof of the existence of collusion between the inhabitants and the guerrillas. A number of people were arrested and some beaten up. The younger men took to the hills. Some of them made their way to Republican territory, but the majority remained and turned into rebels. The Republican guerrillas dispatched instructors to them, large Mauser pistols, and Nationalist currency.

Similar incidents occurred in many other places, and everywhere the suspicion of the Nationalists fell on the local population, because the sympathies of the poor peasants and the workers for the Republican

cause was unmistakenly clear. The wider the guerrilla operations spread, the stronger the suspicion grew that the population was aiding the saboteurs. Reprisals by the military were quick and severe.

One morning, a guerrilla squad of seven men had just blown up a power line and settled down behind rocks to wait for the army repair crew to arrive. In the meantime, four men, who were passing by on their way to the railway station, a kilometer away, approached the scene. Two of them wore military attire, each with a small suitcase in his hand. While they were standing there, contemplating the wreckage, a repair crew and M.P.'s approached. The commandos refrained from blowing them up by remote control for fear of harming the bystanders. The first thing the M.P.'s did was to arrest and search the four men. Then the crew examined the damage and the party left. About ten days later, an announcement appeared in every village along the route, informing the people that four brothers, two of them artillerymen, who had been on furlough in their village, were courtmartialed and shot for blowing up a power line.

Soon acts of repressions spread to other districts, and the rural population became restive. This afforded the guerrilla high command an opportunity to send experienced agitators to several workers' regions with instructions to prepare the ground for guerrilla activities on a broader scale. These attempts were especially successful in the region of Río Tinto and Aroche, about 350 kilometers deep in enemy territory, where one of the world's biggest copper mines is situated. The first operations were carried out there by squads of saboteurs dispatched from Republican Spain. The local authorities reacted to these acts of sabotage with



reprisals against the miners. This caused many miners to flee to the hills. That was the beginning of a long and highly successful guerrilla campaign. The miners, handy with dynamite by virtue of their occupation, quickly mastered the art of demolition and began to blow up bridges, ammunition dumps, and lines of communication. Government troops sent to suppress the guerrillas were unable to clear the hills of them. On the contrary, assisted by information from the inhabitants, the guerrillas succeeded in ambushing and routing the punitive detachments sent to suppress them. The government answered with repressive measures against the families of the fighting miners, and this embittered the rebels still further. It was like a wave against wave, whipping up the passions on both sides. The Río Tinto guerrilla force grew fast and soon numbered three thousand men. But it lacked two important things: competent leaders and suitable weapons. The high command of the Republican guerrillas hastened to provide both. A staff of experienced Spanish saboteurs led by two Soviet experts in guerrilla warfare, Major Strik and Captain S. Glushko, was dispatched to Río Tinto. They made their way there on foot through hundreds of kilometers of enemy territory without incident. They took with them a supply of Nationalist currency and two-way radio transmitters. As soon as the two Russians reached their destination, they selected a suitable site on which Soviet bombers soon dropped the first supply of weapons, which consisted of hundreds of tommy guns, German large automatic Mausers, light carbines, and hand grenades. The Russians stayed for four months, training men in actual combat. One of them, Stepan Glushko, was killed in action. By that time, one Spaniard who com-

bined in himself qualities of a leader with idealism and rare courage had become the commander of the Río Tinto rebels. His name was Dr. Moro, a local physician who had joined the guerrillas voluntarily. Dr. Moro was killed in the spring of 1938 while leading an attack on an enemy arsenal, in which thousands of fully fused artillery shells were blown up.

In 1937 the air forces of both sides in the Spanish Civil War fought for supremacy in the skies. Many breathtaking duels were taking place in clear, sunny weather over Madrid, in view of the public. It was like a colossal circus, with the blue sky as the dome and the people watching from beneath with bated breath to see which of the flying gladiators in the shiny armor of his plane would plummet to death. On the one side there were Spanish and Russian fliers, on the other Spanish and German. Spaniards against Spaniards—this was the essence of the civil conflict. Russians against Germans was the preview of the Russo-German war that was soon to unfold. Guerrillas do not fly planes, but they can do their part in the war against the enemy air force. Spain was the first country in which guerrillas showed that they could fight the battle of the skies on the ground.

The first exploits in this field were carried out by a Spanish guerrilla band under the command of an outstanding Soviet guerrilla fighter, Captain Nicolayevsky. In all his operations he would first gather detailed intelligence on the number of bombers, fighter planes, and men on the enemy air field, the location of the hangars, if any, of the gasoline tanks, of the barracks housing the pilots and ground personnel, and of the position of sentries on duty. His methods of attack



varied. Sometimes he would sneak up to the air field, demobilize the sentries, and assign each of his three squads to specific tasks. One squad would take care of the bombers and the gasoline tanks, another of the barracks, a third of the fighter planes, and so on. Then, at a given signal, hell would descend on the field. The bomber and fighter planes would be blown up and burned, and the gasoline tanks ignited.

At other times his operations were more sophisticated, with a touch of a movie plot in them. In the summer of 1937 he carried out two such assaults within five days. In one of them Nicolayevsky and his men, bearing the insignia of the Nationalist army, sneaked under cover of darkness to the vicinity of the military air field. There he requisitioned two passing military trucks, and the whole gang rode straight to the field. Nicolayevsky was a blond giant and would never be mistaken for a Spaniard. But he could easily pass as a German and, for that reason, he fixed a large swastika band on his arm. They rode past the open-mouthed sentries without stopping, shouting the Fascist slogan "Arriba España" and drove up to the main building. There, Nicolayevsky's Spanish assistant introduced himself to the officer on duty as Captain So-and-so of a certain Franco division, on a special mission, and asked to arrange for them a place to sleep for the remainder of the night. He flashed before the officer his forged identity papers. The officer on duty obliged and sent an orderly to show the men to a barrack-like structure beside a huge hangar. On the way there, they saw a few silhouettes of large-winged bombers. A dozen or so men slept on the bunks in the barracks. This was a perfect replica of the Trojan horse story. Because of the utter darkness, it was impossible to

make out the layout of the field and the disposition of the big birds, and Nicolayevsky decided to wait for the first signs of daybreak.

Finally, when pale light began to filter through to the field, they saw opposite the barracks a new two-story building which, they knew, housed the pilots. Not far away was a row of big bombers. And farther in the field one could make out through the morning mist small clusters of tiny fighter planes. From this moment it was already routine for the battle-hardened guerrillas. Nicolayevsky gave the signal and pandemonium broke loose. Within an hour the band was on its way back to the Republican territory. The cost to the attackers: two lightly wounded guerrillas.

The last heroic exploit accomplished by Nicolayevsky was his attack on a military air field, sixty kilometers from the port of Almería, the southernmost tip of Republican-held territory. He was killed outright, not by the enemy, but by his own hand grenade which exploded prematurely when he swung his arm back to throw it at a group of resisting pilots.

On the way to their targets, the guerrilla commandos were always careful to bypass enemy check points on the roads, and for that reason they were often obliged to take long roundabout hikes over rugged terrain to get to a point which otherwise would have been a simple matter to reach. This often interfered with the time available for the operation, especially in the summer, when the guerrillas had only five hours of darkness to leave their hiding place, make their way to the target, carry out the operation, and move as far as possible from the scene of destruction. To overcome these difficulties the Guerrilla Command



began to furnish the commandos with forged identification and assignment papers in which they figured as outfits of some enemy unit, ostensibly on a special mission. The men, of course, had to be able to name the location of the unit to which they allegedly belonged. These identification papers came in handy also in cases when a guerrilla outfit stumbled unexpectedly on an enemy patrol. Instead of shooting it out, the guerrillas merely produced their papers.

One Spanish commander of a guerrilla platoon devised a way to overcome still another, no less vexing predicament. His outfit had an assignment to blow up an enemy arsenal which, according to intelligence reports, had twenty-four security guards living on the premises. About a quarter of a mile from the arsenal on the highway there was a check point at which the password was demanded from everyone who wanted to enter the compound of the arsenal and the near-by arms repair shops. The guerrillas did not know the password. If they attempted to shoot their way past the check point, the guards at the arsenal would be alerted and the guerrillas would have had a hot reception. The ingenious commander of the group resorted to a trick that disclosed the secret password to him. He stopped his men at a spot on the highway about a mile from the check point and there formed his own "check point" astride the road. He might have stood there with his outfit the whole night in vain, if nobody had come that way. But luck was with him. In about an hour a truck which belonged to the repair shops drove up. "Password?" demanded the commander. The answer was prompt. "God is with us," said the driver. He was waved on. After that, the commando followed its commander, who wore a lieutenant's insignia of the

Nationalist army, toward the arsenal. They approached the check point whistling a Falangist march tune. "Where are you going?" they were asked.—"To the repair shops," answered the lieutenant. "Password?" —"Why, of course, *God is with us!*" The guerrillas attacked the sleeping guards in their quarters. Then they placed charges under the ammunition boxes and the store of explosives and ran for their lives.

The trick of establishing false check points was later put to other uses as well. Little groups of guerrillas, wearing false insignia, established such points in various enemy districts, stopped military cars, examined the papers of the passengers, and inquired about the location of their units, thus gathering fresh intelligence needed for planning new operations. On one occasion an enemy major, who had a briefcase full of logistics data, and his chauffeur, were ordered out of their car and marched to the Republican side. There the major furnished valuable information on the state of military supplies on the Madrid front.

The lessons of Spain proved invaluable to the Russians in the war against the German invaders. Tens of thousands of "partisans" (the Russian name for guerrillas), organized and led by the KGB guerrilla experts, harassed the German overextended lines of communications from Poland to Stalingrad, from Kiev to the Caucasus, and from Latvia to Leningrad, blowing up bridges and troop trains, mining roads, attacking marching columns, and plundering supplies and ammunition. The basic guerrilla strategy developed during the Russian Civil War and in Spain remained essentially the same, but had to be adapted to operations of colossal dimensions. Swelled by the influx of Russian



peasants and city dwellers, many guerrilla bands numbered several thousand each, and, using artillery, mortars, and bazookas seized from the enemy, they were now able to rout battalion-size units of the German army. But the old rules—not to enter into battle against superior forces and not to engage in a war of positions —held good. The basic strategy continued to be that of delivering a lightning blow and disengaging oneself from the enemy in order to get ready to strike the next blow at another place. Harassed, ambushed, and battered at every turn, the Germans found to their sorrow that in Russia the rear was also a fighting front. To get supplies to the German armies across thousands of kilometers of Russian territory had become an almost impossible task. Bridges, rebuilt by the German engineers, were blown up again before they had even been used. Without regular supplies in men and arms, the strength and fighting power of the German armies deep inside Russia could not be sustained. The KGB saboteurs and terrorists roamed the cities in Nazi uniforms with forged credentials and passes. Russian cooks and maidservants, employed in the houses occupied by Hitler's commissioners of occupation, planted bombs in the bedrooms of the German masters and blew them up. The fury of guerrilla warfare was restrained neither by the rules of international conventions nor by humanitarian considerations. Germans captured in guerrilla battles were not given the status of prisoners-of-war and were shot on the spot.

# XVI. Evaluation of Information

One of the important functions of intelligence is the evaluation of the information obtained as to its authenticity and political significance. The standard procedure of evaluating the authenticity of a document hinges on the examination of the physical characteristics of the procured material and on the analysis of its content.

The paramount element in evaluating a document, or a piece of oral information, is the degree of reliability of the *source,* through which the information has been obtained. If a completely trustworthy informant brings a document which he lifted from the secret files, the Soviet officer knows it is above suspicion. The same goes for oral information. When a devoted informant, who has always been truthful, says that he has seen or read such and such a report, or transcript of a conference, the intelligence officer knows that this is so.

In cases when the informant has not yet been sufficiently tested, the Soviet intelligence tries to check every scrap of paper, or information, that comes from him. The checking is less difficult when the Soviet intelligence has a parallel informant in the same government office with access to the same files.

It must be said that in the departments of Western governments secret documents are not always guarded well enough, and this neglect has been taken advantage



of by the Soviet intelligence. The transcripts of most secret meetings of the government are usually sent out to at least 18–20 dignitaries, each of whom has an office with clerks and secretaries who have or can have access to the material. There were cases when a Western government had become aware that a certain transcript of one of its meetings had fallen into the hands of the Russians. However, it was impossible to ascertain from which of the twenty places the document had been lifted and photographed. Often the Soviet *residentura* in a foreign country receives the same document from two places. This affords the possibility of crosschecking the work of two informants.

The Soviet intelligence is more wary with documents received from informants who are greedy for money, especially in cases where the amount of the reward, or bonus, is geared to the importance of the document. I remember a case, when a fairly valuable informant in Germany, wishing to secure for himself higher pay, claimed that he had read and made brief notes from a draft of a secret treaty which was being negotiated between Japan and Germany. Because the treaty was directed against the Soviet Union, the information created quite a stir in the Kremlin. However, within a month of checking, the *residentura* succeeded in establishing that the informant lied, which he himself finally admitted.

The law of demand and supply manifests itself in intelligence too. Knowing that government agencies seek information and pay well for it, some unscrupulous persons get busy forging "secret" information and offer it to various governments. Some falsifiers who have a knack for international affairs and follow the world press closely are able to fabricate documents

which attract the interest of the foreign offices of the world. These characters approach foreign embassies and ministries with their wares, often misrepresenting themselves as go-betweens acting in behalf of "personal friends" in the diplomatic service of another state. Some intelligence services are taken in and begin to acquire the material, only to find out later that they were paying money for outright forgeries. And sometimes they are even unable to get rid of an unscrupulous supplier, because an influential policymaker of the government has found the information interesting and thought-provoking, if not outright authentic.

In matters of international relations, the extent to which highly qualified persons can be taken in can be seen from the fact that a manuscript fraudulently misrepresented in the United States as the political diary of the former Soviet foreign commissar Maxim Litvinov was adjudged authentic by a number of American experts on the Soviet Union. Former head of the CIA and Undersecretary of State Bedell Smith lent his official prestige to the book by writing a preface to Litvinov's *Diary* when it was published in the United States under the title *Notes of a Journal*. Actually, the manuscript was faked by a former Soviet diplomat who had broken with the Kremlin many years ago and who had fallen upon evil days. This shows how difficult and unsafe is the task of evaluating political information.

This is the reason why Soviet intelligence attributes great importance to knowing the source of the information and to judging it by the degree of the trustworthiness of the informant. And this is why the Soviet intelligence, as a rule, refuses to deal with middlemen who decline to name the source of the material and the person from whom they have procured it. If the documents are very interesting and look genuine, the Russian officer may offer considerably more money than the middleman has asked for, on the condition that he disclose the source and, if necessary, bring the Soviet officer and the informant together. If the middleman is adamant in his refusal, the intelligence officer will play with him for a while, making offers and counteroffers, just for the purpose of trailing him to the person who has access to the secret papers, with the intention of establishing direct contact with him.



The Soviet intelligence does not involve itself in broad research programs which inevitably lead to hypotheses the evaluation of which entails insurmountable difficulties and responsibilities. It works instead with documentary data—procured from the secret councils of foreign governments—in which the intentions and future steps of the governments are spelled out. The evaluation done by the Soviet intelligence concerns itself more with establishing the authenticity of the stolen documents rather than with the significance of the information. The political significance of the information is evaluated principally by the policymaking members of the government and the Party Presidium. To prepare the material for the Politburo there existed in Stalin's times the so-called Little Council of six members (from the NKVD, Intelligence Directorate of the Army and the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs), under chairmanship of Poscriobyshev, chief of Stalin's Secretariat, and Malenkov.